

# FATALITY



AFZF-GA-SAFE

## DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY HEADQUARTERS III CORPS AND FORT HOOD FORT HOOD, TEXAS 76544-5056



28 June 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: POV Fatality/Injury Carnage Continue -- Fatality Memo 02-14

1. During the last two weekends, III Corps recorded two more POV fatalities in two separate accidents. This makes 14 POV fatalities for us so far this fiscal year – not a record to be proud of. As is standard procedure with military fatalities, the installation Casualty Assistance Office had the very unpleasant duty of notifying grieving families. The first of these two fatal incidents was especially horrific due to the soldier's vehicle crashing into a metal light pole at approximately 80 mph, more than double the posted speed limit. For unknown reasons, the soldier's vehicle crossed three lanes of traffic and rammed into the light pole. The unbelievably powerful impact almost severed the car in half, with the light pole slicing into the driver's compartment like a knife. Looking at the pictures of the soldier's car completely wrapped around the light pole, there is no wonder that the driver was pronounced dead at the scene. The other incident occurred when a soldier was rear-ended at approximately 40 mph while innocently waiting at a traffic light in broad daylight. The unsuspecting soldier in the front vehicle received massive chest/head injuries, aggravated by a back window shelf speaker that became airborne and struck the soldier's head. He died four days later as a result of massive injuries, while the driver of the vehicle that struck him was miraculously uninjured.
2. Most of the severe POV accidents in the Corps occur on weekends, especially during long weekends. What this tells me is that soldiers, who have more time on their hands on weekends than during the week, engage in more risky driving behavior on weekends. Whether this risky behavior is drinking and driving, driving while fatigued, overextending driving distances, or general recklessness, it is all unacceptable behavior. Unfortunately, at times soldiers find out the hard way that this kind of behavior results in very serious consequences, some of which don't give a second chance for correction or recovery.
3. This is where we really have to depend on our leaders' engagement, stepping in and doing all that they can do to positively modify their soldiers' behavior in order to ensure safe driving habits. Commanders cannot let up on constantly charging their leaders with the important task of reaching the young soldiers with the safety message. Soldiers' lives depend on this leadership persistence. Your leaders should know who their targets are – soldiers who consistently demonstrate reckless/aggressive driving habits. By the way, about a third of our fatalities are sergeants, so risky behavior is not restricted to young privates and specialists. I want subordinates to arm their leaders, especially first line leaders (SSGs, SFCs, 1LTs and CPTs), with all the right tools to combat their soldiers' high risk driving behavior. Your leaders can find some of these POV safety tools at the Army Safety Center and installation safety office web sites and public folders. Direct your leaders to glean useful tools from these resources, especially the Army Safety Center's "POV Tool Box."
4. Leading up to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July long holiday weekend, we are at the front-end of one of the busiest travel seasons of the year. In addition to the usual holiday safety briefings, POV safety checks, and leadership risk assessments, you and your leaders must "go the extra mile" to prepare your soldiers for the holiday and the remainder of the summer. I expect leaders to be totally engaged in the welfare of their soldiers and their families. Train and arm your leaders to accomplish this. If we don't change the driving habits of our target soldiers, needless deaths will continue to occur.

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B. B. BELL  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Commanding

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